# LADY HELEN CLYDE
## A ROMANCE

BY

ABRAM LENT SMITH

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# THE ROMAUNT

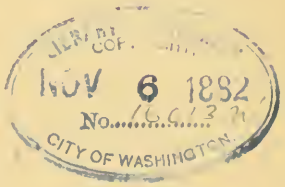
OF

# LADY HELEN CLYDE.

BY

ABRAM LENT SMITH.

"Aye me! for aught that I could ever read,
Could ever hear by tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth."

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LADY HELEN CLYDE

*Dedicated to my friend, Richard Henry Stoddard, to whom I am indebted for one long series of kindnesses, from our friendship's beginning.*

I

HAVE you leisure for a story? Listen to this
song I sing you;
Draw your chair beside the fire; heap the irons
with wood well dried:
And as upward leap the blazes, from the long ago I'll
bring you
Memories of the hapless love of Lady Helen
Clyde.

2

Pure and fair, of queenly bearing, she was like the
stately lilies;
Some were wont to call her haughty, but the
word was ill applied;
Lovely as the Houris was she, graceful as the
daffodillies;
And her eyes were so bewitching, suitors came
from far and wide.

3

With her father, proud and noble, lived she in a
stately palace,
(Years agone her mother left her for a brighter,
happier sphere):
Thus she reigned its only mistress, but that draught
from Sorrow's chalice
Filled her youthful life with care,—brought melan-
choly near.

D. Clinton Peters

4

But to mitigate her sorrow, to divert his child from dreaming,
Lord Clyde thronged his spacious mansion with the noble and the great,
And with music, art, and dancing, strove to win the native beaming
Back into her tear-dimmed eyes, and make her heart elate.

5

And this was wise, for oftentimes her spirit would grow lighter,
Her cheeks would flush to crimson, her eyes like stars would burn ;
And overjoyed her father was, whene'er her face grew brighter,
But too steeped in worldly matters the true secret to discern.

6

There was one among the many whom she loved, but
scarce revealed it,
And this one among the many also loved but
dare not speak;
He was but an humble artist, without riches,—so
concealed it,
Hid the love that thrilled his heart, and mantled
in his glowing cheek.

7

And he longed to paint her picture, so one day the
honor asked her,
And with all the coy abandon of a nymph she
said, "you may;"
Then with brain and bosom fired, he each day an hour
tasked her
'Til his beauteous creation stood out peerless in
array.

8

But I doubt much, if with weariness she ever were less laden,
Than while with her artist-lover, as each day his genius strove
To portray the ethereal features of this more than lovely maiden;
For 'twas during these bright hours, that he whispered of his love.

9

As she hearkened to his story—O! to her 'twas music rarest,
Sweeter than the woodland's chorus showered on the fragrant breeze;
O! they loved as such souls can love—deep—as did those four the fairest,
Hero and her brave Leander, Abailard and Heloise.

10

Never were there two more suited in this world for one another ;
Both had souls filled with the beautiful, had natures, noble given ;
He was fashioned Ganymede-like, and appeared her spirit's brother ;
She had form akin to angels, and seemed less of earth than heaven.

11

But there was a cruel distance 'twixt these lovers' different stations ;
She was bred a noble lady, he was but a peasant born ;
And her proud and haughty father ne'er would sanction such relations,
To degrade the princely honors of his line, his soul would scorn.

12

Time on agile wings sped swiftly, months rolled
onward into seasons,
And a score of high-born suitors for her hand had
been denied;
But so kind and gentle was she, each one felt mayhap
her reasons
Might evanish and be o'ercome if he lingered by
her side.

13

But her vain, ambitious father, to advance his family
honor,
Urged the wooing of a rich and noble Duke of
high degree;
He had ships and costly manors, he had gold to
cast upon her,
And he lived in regal splendor in a castle by
the sea.

HENDERSON-PETERS

14

So this Duke, bestarred and gartered, Lady Helen
grandly courted,
Brought her necklaces of rubies, precious pearls
and diamonds rare;
Said she should become his consort (never dreaming
to be thwarted),
Said her life should be all sunshine, alien to all
grief and care.

15

But to this proud Duke's amazement, (and her father's
great displeasure),
Lady Helen calmly told him, that she could not
be his bride,
Courteously refused his presents, and in words of
friendly measure,
Hoped he'd wed with one more worthy—gently
thus his suit denied.

16

With choleric indignation, Lord Clyde asked his lovely daughter,
Why her will to his ran counter, why she did not acquiesce?
Swore she ne'er should wed another, that her willfulness and hauteur
Yet would bring disgrace upon her, mar her future happiness!

17

"Father," said she, with a meekness worthy of a soul seraphic,
"Would you have me wed a husband, who can offer naught but gold?
One who values not love's dower, only dreams of ships and traffic?
No—I'm sure you would not, father, have me into slavery sold."

18

"Tush! my child! they'll prove your ruin, such fantastic speculations;
Know you not the Duke has riches, which your wants would more than sate?
Think how great would be your honors, and where'er you went, ovations
Would be rendered if you wisely linked yourself with such a mate."

19

"Praise is but a bubble, father—wealth perhaps may prove no treasure,
But a soul with true love pulsing, is a thing that never dies;
Noble deeds, not gold, make greatness; loving hearts, not titles, measure
Claims to happiness on earth, or joy beyond the skies."

20

"Helen," said her father, "hear me; banish from your
mind forever
All such sentimental notions—they will bring
you, child, but ill!"
But with sweetness, yet with firmness, Lady Helen
answered, "Never!
Never, father, 'till my heart shall in this breast
be still!

21

"Hear me, father, hear my story; there is one I'll
wed or no man;
I would rather choose a cottage than a castle by
the sea!
Is he noble? Aye, believe me, noble as the noblest
Roman—
Father, 'tis our gifted friend, the artist, Mortimer
Du Vee."

22

"Silence, girl!" exclaimed her father, "never shall your wish be granted!
Rather would I see you lying, cold and still, to wake no more;
He shall leave our home this moment, he who has your wits enchanted,
And he ne'er again as guest shall cross the threshold of our door!"

23

With an eloquence of silence and a rhetoric of sadness,
Helen gazed upon her father for a while—then softly said:
"Be it so!" 'Twas all she uttered; but, alas! the wonted gladness
Ne'er regained its old dominion; for her heart in secret bled.

24

All that night within her chamber Lady Helen, broken-hearted,
Watched the moonbeams weirdly falling on the silver waves below ;
Thought and wept about her lover, who that evening had departed,
And the great, pure stars in heaven paled beneath her hopeless woe.

25

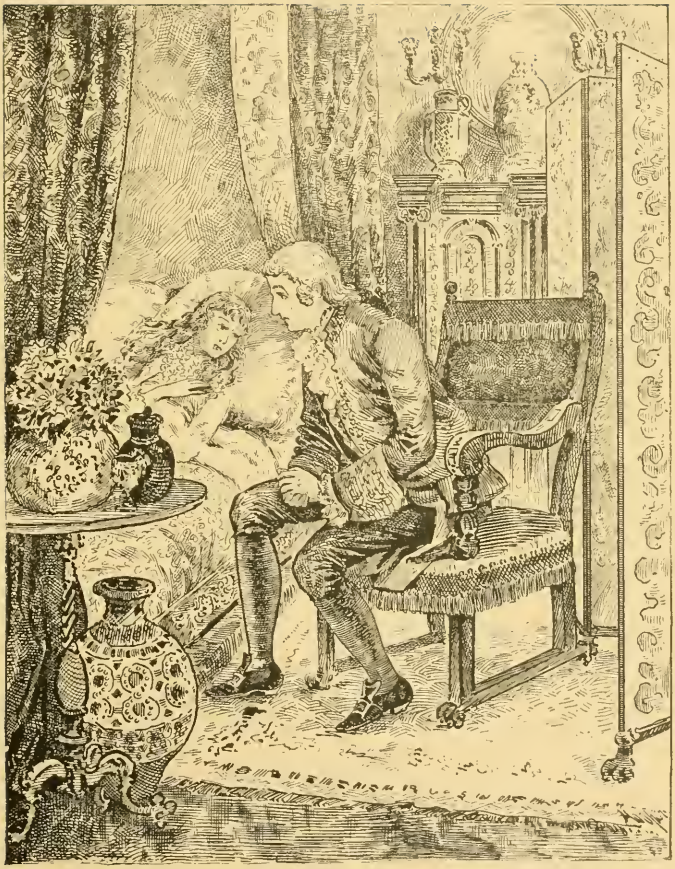
Months rolled on, but brought no tidings from the hero of our story ;
Day by day sweet Lady Helen's face did thinner, paler grow ;
'Til she heard the angels call her from the gleaming gates of glory,
When she whispered, "Father, kiss me once again before I go."

26

But the proud old man was ireful—did not see his
child was drooping
Like a parched and pallid lily, for the water he
might give.
"Ere you go? What is your meaning; what new
riddles are you grouping?
Do you think to leave our palace—in some
humbler place to live?"

27

"Yes, I think to leave it, father; but I go to one far
dearer,
Grander, richer, and more lovely than I e'er have
seen before;
In my dreams last night I saw it, and I feel to-day
I'm nearer
To the home of the Immortals, than I e'er have
been before."



28

Like a vivid flash of lightning, on a night of darkness utter,
Flashed the truth on his proud spirit that her life was ebbing fast;
Thin and pale he saw her face was, and his heart began to flutter
As he marvelled at his blindness, now the truth was seen at last.

29

Long he gazed in silence at her, then on brow of fever kissed her;
Said, with voice of deep contrition, "Is there aught that I can do?
Name it, darling, never fearing"—and the tears began to ; lister,
As remorseful thought, unsparing, brought the cruel past to view.

30

"Bend thine ear, I have a message; draw your chair
beside me, nigher—
Hark! methinks I hear his footsteps borne upon
the passing wind?
No—'twas my disordered fancy—father, draw the cur-
tain higher,
For the light is growing dim: your hand I
cannot find!

31

"There! now listen to me, father,—when the last
sleep I am sleeping,
Take this packet that I give you, and if *he* still
lives below,
Send it—whatsoe'er the distance—there! I leave it
in your keeping—
'Tis a note, with some few trinkets, that he gave
me long ago."

32

"Helen, I will do it for you, do it with a heartfelt gladness—
O! Remorse, thy sting is bitter; would that I could flee thee, far!
What a wretched man I must be, to surround my child with sadness,
'Til the angels, out of pity, steal away my morning star!"

33

Long he stood in thought; then quickly left the room with footsteps hurried—
Soon a courier, under orders, dashed out through the palace gate:—
Lord Clyde watched his faithful servant, for his heart was sorely worried—
Much he feared he could not bring her lover ere it was too late.

34

All that night 'twould take to reach him; but by sunset on the morrow,
Circumstances all propitious, Mortimer could with them be:
So when next day waned to evening, Lord Clyde hope began to borrow;
For his child was yet alive, and Helen's lover near must be!

35

"Cheer up, Helen," said her father, "Mortimer Du Vee is flying,
Just as fast as my fleet charger can transport him from the main;
But too long I know I've waited; for, my child, I fear you're dying,
And I fain would have you, Helen, meet your lover once again."

36

"I have cruel been, my daughter, and I would I could undo it!
I had hoped to have you marry with that Duke of high degree;
But my course was wrong—I see it! as I sadly now review it,
And I would to God you'd married with your artist-love, Du Vee!"

37

Helen gazed upon her father, smiled, and in a voice keyed sweetly,
Said, "You've made me very happy, and I now can calmly die.
Hark! dear father, he is coming—some one rides the roadway fleetly—
No! it is no airy fancy, for I feel his spirit nigh."

38

Up her father sprang; for surely, some one rode at rate most furious
O'er the bridge, and through the gateway, up the path to castle door;
Then a page in waiting entered, with a look of wonder curious,
Gave "My lord" a slip of paper—on it "Mortimer—" no more.

39

"Show him in," said Lord Clyde, quickly; "hasten—time is very precious!"
Soon a form of manly bearing stood within the sick-room door.
Lord Clyde pointed to his daughter, gave his hand in welcome gracious,
"Hasten," said he, "to her bedside, for she soon will be no more."

40

Helen recognized her lover, as he tenderly bent o'er her,
And she gave her hand in welcome, and he kissed it o'er and o'er;
Smoothed aback her golden tresses, asked if aught he could do for her—
"Only this," she sweetly murmured—"meet me on the other shore.

41

"Hark! what means that burst of music? See! they're waiting to receive me!
Don't you see them? soft—they're calling—ah! how light it grows," she cried.
"O! what beauty—Hark! the music—farewell, father; now I leave thee!
Farewell, Mortimer," she whispered—and within his arms she died.

42

What more would you have me tell you? I might
make the story longer,
But the wood is burned to embers and the hour
is waxing late—
Partings here are not forever; true love is a thing
far stronger
Than all time can ever weaken or chill death
can dissipate.

43

And the losses and the crosses, in this world by sor-
row nighted,
Blossom into fair fruition just beyond the mystic
sea,—
Where true hearts that here were plighted and by
circumstances blighted,
Will forever be united thro' a vast Eternity.

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